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DRYDEN AND SHELLEY ON MILTON.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—In *Adonais*, the fourth stanza, Shelley says of Milton :

He went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death ; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth ; the third among the sons of light.

Rossetti comments on the last clause as follows (*Adonais*, ed. W. M. Rossetti and A. O. Prickard, p. 103): 'At first sight this phrase might seem to mean "the third-greatest poet of the world" : in which case one might suppose Homer and Shakespeare to be ranked as the first and second. But it may be regarded as tolerably clear that Shelley is here thinking only of *epic* poets ; and that he ranges the epic poets according to a criterion of his own, which is thus expressed in his *Defence of Poetry* (written in the same year as *Adonais*, 1821): "Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet ; that is, the second poet the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it—developing itself in correspondence with their development. . . . Milton was the third epic poet."'

It would not have been amiss to add the well-known lines of Dryden which 'appeared under the engraving prefixed to Tonson's folio edition of the *Paradise Lost*' (Dryden, *Works*, ed. Scott and Saintsbury, 11. 162) :

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
The first, in loftiness of thought surpassed ;
The next, in majesty ; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no further go ;
To make a third, she joined the former two.

'Mr. Malone,' says Scott, 'regards Dryden's hexastich as an amplification of Selvaggi's distich, addressed to Milton while at Rome ;—

Græcia Mæonidem, jactet sibi Roma Maronem,
Anglia Miltonum jactat utrique parem.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that Shelley was familiar with the inscription by Dryden. If so, his tacit substitution of Dante for Virgil is all the more significant.

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A NEW MANUSCRIPT OF CHAUCER'S *Monkes Tale.*

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—Trinity College Cambridge ms. R. 3. 19 is a heterogeneous mass of fifteenth century poetry, chiefly famous as being the source of most

of Stow's additions to Chaucer, in his 1561 collection. The manuscript has been often described, and the latest description accessible to all is in Dr. James' Catalogue of the mss. of this library, vol. II. An additional note upon articles number 39 and 40 in his summary of contents there printed is however needed, since Dr. James did not identify these items, except under the ms. title 'Bochas.'

On folio 170b, a *prohenium* beginning

Worshipfull and dysereate that here present be
I wyll yow tell a tale, two or thre,

is to be identified as the monk's opening speech, in the Oxford Chaucer, B 3157–3180. The first line as here given is the work of the person who made these extracts ; the rest are all Chaucer's. The monk's speech is written as if composed in three stanzas of eight lines each, instead of in couplets. There follows the *Monkes Tale*, B 3181–3196 (De Lucifero). Then, because Chaucer had not done justice to Adam in his one poor stanza, the scribe substituted Lydgate's long account of Adam in the *Fall of Princes*, and certain envoys from the same source, in Bk. I, chaps. 1, 3, 4, 8 (in part). This brings us to folio 179a, where the scribe went back to the *Monkes Tale*, and completed it, from Sampson to Cresus, B 3205–3956. The order and contents are as given in the latest manuscripts, except that ll. 3565–3588 were omitted—on Pedro of Cyprus and Pedro of Spain—and l. 3611 was passed over by mistake, and the stanzas following that line confused thereby. Having completed the *Monkes Tale*, and added his *Explicit*, the scribe went on with extracts and envoys from the *Fall of Princes*, in the following order : Books I, chapters 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 23 ; II, 2, 1, 6, 12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 25, 27, 30 ; III, 5, 9, 10, 14, 17, 20.

This performance is interesting, as exhibiting the taste which could select this tale of all others for reading, and then supplement Chaucer by Lydgate. The manuscript belongs not far from Edward IV's time, and the fall of princes was then an absorbing topic.

For textual purposes the ms. is of little value, though excellent for its time.

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A NOTE ON BROWNING.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes.

SIRS:—In *Caliban on Setebos* Browning uses a peculiar device which he affects nowhere else (except sporadically) in his poems, and which, so far as I have observed, no other writer uses.